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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 000886

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/06/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#) [GG](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY: U/S APAKAN UNDERSCORES IMPORTANCE OF
ENHANCED REGIONAL COOPERATION

REF: ANKARA 878

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: MFA U/S Apakan discussed his recent Washington consultations, Turkey's efforts with Iraq, and Georgia's participation in NATO's Air Situation Data Exchange (ASDE) during a meeting with Ambassador May 5. Apakan was positive on meetings with USG officials. He highlighted confidence building initiatives with Iraq and plans for a regional investment conference in Istanbul this fall. He is working to expedite the Council of Ministers' approval of a MOU linking Georgia to ASDE via Turkey. End Summary.

Continuing the Strategic Dialogue

12. (C) MFA U/S Apakan told Ambassador his April strategic dialogue meetings in Washington with Acting U/S Fried, U/S Jeffery, Deputy NSA Jeffrey, Deputy NSA GEN Lute, and EEB A/S Sullivan were very constructive and should continue. Apakan said he is anxious to finish the EPC action plan. He hoped it would include new initiatives on small and medium enterprises (SME), energy, and science and technology cooperation. He urged that both countries proceed to implement items where we agree without waiting for the action plan's completion. The Ambassador encouraged additional consultations, noting that he hopes Jeffery, A/S Boucher, and Regional Energy Envoy Ambassador Gray will visit Turkey in the coming months. He also expressed interest in a visit by MFA Deputy U/S Cevikoz to the U.S. for consultations (reftel).

Enhancing Iraqi and Regional Cooperation

13. (C) Apakan described recent exchanges with Iraq, including the KRG. Planning for his own Iraq trip is underway. The GOT wants to move ahead with plans to host a regional investment conference in Istanbul this fall, most likely in September. Pointing to the recent visit of Iraqi DCHOD Abadi to Ankara, Apakan noted Turkey is also negotiating a bilateral defense cooperation agreement with the GOI, which would create a new, positive environment between the two militaries. Regarding Turkey's cross-border operations in Northern Iraq, Ambassador urged that Turkey find a way now regularly to notify Iraq of what it is doing. Apakan said he would look into it.

¶4. (C) Apakan said FM Babacan strongly encouraged Arab countries to open embassies in Baghdad as a show of support to the GOI at the Iraq Neighbors Ministerial in Kuwait. In addition, the GOT is increasing its engagement with Gulf Cooperation Council countries, including a possible free trade agreement with the group and establishing bilateral strategic dialogues, as an effort to counter Iran's influence in the region. The Ambassador noted Afghan President Karzai's announcement at the Bucharest NATO Summit on planning to assume responsibility for greater Kabul security. He encouraged the GOT to consider expanding its efforts in Afghanistan to support this. Apakan took this on board.

ASDE Ready, Awaiting MOU Ratification

¶5. (C) Ambassador and Apakan discussed the Georgia Air Situation Data Exchange issue. Ambassador urged prompt action by the Council of Ministers so that this system can become operational ASAP. The MFA has forwarded the MOU for approval and is trying to accelerate a process that normally takes four to six weeks. The relevant infrastructure, he assured, is tested and ready for use as soon as the MOU enters into effect.

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